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SUBJECT: CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT-ELECT FROM THE  
PRESIDENT OF KIRIBATI

REF: STATE 118192

¶1. Embassy Suva received the enclosed letter dated 6 November 2008, addressed to the President-elect Honorable Barack Obama from the President of Kiribati, Anote Tong. The text of the letter follows.

BEGIN TEXT.

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and people of Kiribati, and personally, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes on your successful election to the highest office of the United States of America.

Your historic election to this esteemed office demonstrates the confidence the people of the United States of America have in your able leadership and broad vision to steer your country into a brighter future. Kiribati and the Pacific are indeed proud and honored to be associated with you, as a fellow son of the Pacific, on this historic occasion.

As fellow members of the international community, our two countries share similar concerns on global challenges of our time, in particular those posed by climate change and sea level rise. We both acknowledge that climate change is indeed happening as a result of human activities and that global action is required now. As you are probably aware, this is of major concern to my country and my people given our extreme vulnerability to any slight sea rise in sea level due to our geography. For my people, this is a matter of survival.

In this regard, I applaud your resolve to provide the required leadership in addressing this issue through targeted domestic measures, through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change mechanism, and through the offer of assistance to developing countries to help them address this issue.

Our two countries have always enjoyed a warm relationship and cooperated at both bilateral and multilateral levels in advancing issues of mutual interest. I am confident that under your esteemed leadership and with your Pacific heritage the ties between our two countries will grow from strength to strength. I look forward to working closely with you in addressing issues of mutual concern for the mutual benefit of our respective peoples.

Please accept best wishes from my wife, Meme, to your good wife, Michelle, and young daughters, Malia and Sasha, as well as our Kiribati blessing of Te Mauri (health), Te Raoi (peace), ao Te Tabomoa (and prosperity) as you lead your country into a safe and prosperous future.

Yours sincerely,

(signed Anote Tong)  
Beretitenti (President)

END TEXT

¶2. A copy of the original letter will be sent via unclassified pouch to EAP/ANP.

